

Message Text

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NEA-10 EUR-25 ARA-11 EA-11 IO-13 NSC-10 L-03 ACDA-19

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ARA: JKUBISCH - EA: LIRICK

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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E. O. 11652 N/ A

TAGS: TSPA, XX

SUBJ: SKYLAB

REF: STATE 91258

1. AS ONE PART OF THEIR SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES, THE ASTRO-
NAUTS ON THE MANNED SPACE LABORATORY, SKYLAB, WILL CONDUCT
REMOTE SENSING EXPERIMENTS OF THE EARTH' S SURFACE ON EACH
OF THE THREE PLANNED MISSIONS, THE FIRST OF WHICH WAS
LAUNCHED ON MAY 25 FOR A PLANNED DURATION OF 28 DAYS. (MOST
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OF THEIR TIME, HOWEVER, WILL BE DEVOTED TO ACTIVITIES NOT RELATED TO REMOTE SENSING.) THE REMOTE SENSING EXPERIMENTS ARE BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE SAME GENERAL GUIDELINES THAT APPLY TO THE EARTH RESOURCES TECHNOLOGY SATELLITE, ERTS-1, WHICH WAS LAUNCHED LAST JULY (SEE CA-5384, DEC. 2, 1971.) UNDER THESE RULES, ALL EARTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL DATA ARE PUT IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND WILL BE AVAILABLE AT A NOMINAL FEE FROM THE SIOUX FALLS DATA CENTER.

2. ABOUT FORTY- FIVE INVESTIGATIONS FROM TWENTY- ONE COUNTRIES AND THE FAO HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED FOR SKYLAB. A LIST OF THESE COUNTRIES IS BEING POUCHED. SKYLAB EARTH RESOURCES SURVEYS ARE PREPONDERANTLY DIRECTED TO THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE, ESPECIALLY TO THE US, AND WILL FOCUS PRIMARILY ON PRE- ARRANGED QUOTE TEST SITES UNQUOTE TO BE UTILIZED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COOPERATIVE EXPERIMENTS NOTED ABOVE.

3. SOME SKYLAB CAMERAS HAVE HIGHER RESOLUTIONS THAN THOSE OF ERTS AND SHOULD PRODUCE IMAGERY OF 100 FEET OR BETTER IN CONTRAST TO ERTS IMAGERY OF 250-300 FEET. THE TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS OF SKYLAB CAMERAS AND SENSORS HAVE BEEN COVERED IN A NUMBER OF NASA PRESS RELEASES.

4. THE RELEASE OF SKYLAB IMAGERY AFTER THE RETURN OF THE FIRST MISSION MAY CONTRIBUTE TO CONCERN IN SOME COUNTRIES ABOUT SECURITY AND CONTROL OVER INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO NATURAL RESOURCES. SOME COUNTRIES HAVE EXPRESSED SENSITIVITY TO EARTH OBSERVATIONS FROM SPACE IN VARIOUS UN FORUMS AND ELSEWHERE AND HAVE SUGGESTED A NEED FOR LEGAL GUIDELINES FOR EARTH RESOURCES SURVEYS FROM SPACE, EVEN THOUGH AIR OR GROUND ACCESS TO ANY REGION FOR VERIFICATION OF CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM SPACE- ACQUIRED DATA IS NECESSARY IN MOST INSTANCES AND SUCH ACCESS IS POSSIBLE ONLY WITH THE CONSENT OF COUNTRY CONCERNED. IT IS THE US POSITION THAT THE ERTS AND SKYLAB PROGRAMS, WHICH ARE UNCLASSIFIED AND EXPERIMENTAL, AND THE GUIDELINES THAT WE APPLY TO THEM ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE OUTER SPACE TREATY. WE RECOMMEND, HOWEVER, THAT POSTS AVOID DISCUSSION OF THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THIS QUESTION, WHICH IN DUE TIME WILL PROBABLY BE REVIEWED IN A UN FORUM.

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5. POSTS ARE REQUESTED TO BE ALERT DURING THE THREE MANNED MISSIONS TO EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ABOUT OR POSITIVE INTEREST IN SKYLAB'S REMOTE SENSING ACTIVITIES IN THE PRESS OR FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES AND TO REPORT THEM PROMPTLY TO THE DEPARTMENT. HOWEVER, POSTS SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT SOLICIT VIEWS OR CALL ATTENTION TO SKYLAB'S

RESOLUTION CAPABILITY.

6. N. B. UNLIKE ERTS, WHICH FOLLOWS A NEAR POLAR ORBIT
AND COVERS ALMOST ALL THE AREA OF THE EARTH, SKYLAB
HAS AN INCLINATION OF 50 DEGREES AND HENCE WILL NOT PASS
OVER TERRITORY NORTH OF 50 DEGREES LATITUDE OR SOUTH
OF 50 DEGREES SOUTH LATITUDE. RUSH

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